



LETTER *from the* BISHOP

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

Since 2013 I have had the privilege of praying with you, visiting our parishes and schools, and serving as your bishop. During this time, I have come to know the Catholic Church in West Michigan as a place where people desire deeply to grow in their relationship with Jesus. What a blessing for me this has been!

We are called to evangelize, to live our faith following Jesus' example. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided us with many examples of the Savior's selfless love. No better commandment can be found than the Great Commandment that Jesus taught: to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and our neighbor as ourself. I believe it is through witnessing the visible example of faith by Catholics in our diocese that many young men have answered God's call to discern the priesthood. In response, we are called to accompany them now as seminarians who are preparing to shepherd us on our own spiritual journeys in the future. Similarly, we seek to provide a dignified retirement for our priests who have given their lives in service to us for decades.

In order to meet these long-term needs, we have launched the *Our Shepherds – Our Future* Capital Campaign. Jesus tells us, "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (Jn 10:11) Our men who discern a priestly vocation say *Yes* to this countercultural and life-giving path, following in the footsteps of priests who have come before them. Through your example, it is my hope that all our shepherds – past, present, and future – will come to know the generous hearts of our faithful people ever more deeply.

While the last wave has been delayed due to the pandemic, I am confident that by working together, clergy and laity alike, we can lead our diocese into the future. I ask you to join me in prayer and generosity as we embark on this historic and transformational journey as one Church.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids

